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SUBJECT: UN DEMOCRACY FUND: TEXT OF NOTE FROM UN SECRETARY
GENERAL

REF: USUN 460

¶1. (U) Mission received the following diplomatic note from the UN Secretary-General regarding the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF). The note outlines the vision and basic structure of the Fund and notes the first meeting of the Advisory Board that took place on March 6. (Note: Reftel reports on Advisory Board meeting. End note.) Exact text of note follows in para 2 below.

¶2. (U) Text of note from UN:

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representatives of all missions accredited to the United Nations and has the honour to bring to their attention the following information concerning the United Nations Democracy Fund.

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) was established by the Secretary-General in July 2005. It was subsequently welcomed by Heads of State and Government at the September 2005 World Summit, when they reaffirmed that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. They also reaffirmed that there is no single model of democracy, that it does not belong to any country or region, and reaffirmed the necessity of due respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination. The Summit Outcome stresses that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The Heads of State and Government also renewed their commitment to support democracy by strengthening countries' capacity to implement the principles and practices of democracy, and resolved to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to assist Member States upon their request.

With the establishment of the Fund, the United Nations created a funding mechanism that will support activities to promote and strengthen democracy in the world. Member States have clearly signaled their willingness to commit financial resources, and the Fund already has over \$41 million committed by countries from various regions of the world. The Secretary-General encourages additional contributions to the

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Fund.

The UNDEF will seek to promote democracy worldwide by providing assistance to projects aiming at consolidating and strengthening democratic institutions and processes. Possible areas of support could include: democratic dialogue; constitution-review processes; civil society empowerment; civic education; citizens' access to information; media development; and political parties.

It is envisaged that, in the first year, the Fund will engage in a broad consultative process to clearly map out its distinct niche of activity. The comparative advantage of the Fund is expected to be in supporting the enabling environment necessary for already established democratic institutions to function more effectively.

While the main focus of the Fund's work will be to support country-level initiatives, it is envisaged that a limited number of projects may go beyond and above the country level to include initiatives to support the intellectual understanding of democratization issues and experience and to advance normative values and exchanges of practical experience.

The UNDEF is located in the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). An Advisory Board, a Programme Consultative Group (PCG), and the Office of the UN Democracy Fund constitute the three main governing mechanisms of UNDEF.

The Secretary-General has established an Advisory Board composed of 17 members. It includes representatives from the largest Member State contributors to the Fund, as well as representatives from Member States selected by the Secretary-General to reflect diverse geographical

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representation. It also includes representatives from civil society and personal representatives of the Secretary-General. The main purpose of the Advisory Board is

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to provide policy guidance for the development of a programme framework and funding guidelines, and to recommend funding proposals for approval by the Secretary-General.

The PCG consists of seven representatives from different UN departments, agencies and programmes. It provides advice to the Advisory Board on programme funding criteria and on project proposals.

The core functions of the UNDEF Office include developing programme funding criteria, in consultation with the PCG, and soliciting innovative proposals.

The first session of the UNDEF Advisory Board will take place on 6 March. It will initiate the operations of the Fund and signal that it is officially open for work.
End text.

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